

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated June 14, 2006, issued in connection with the above-identified application. Presently, claims 1, 3, 8-9, 11-12, 14, 18-23, 25-30 and 33-39 are pending in the patent application. Claims 2, 4-7, 10, 13, 15-17, 24, and 31-32 were canceled without prejudice. With this Response, claims 1, 3, 18-23 and 38-39 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced by this Response; thus, favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

I. Examiner Interview

The Applicants thank Examiner Pollack for granting the interview conducted with the Applicants' representative on September 1, 2006. During the interview, possible allowable amendments to the independent claims were discussed. In particular, the Examiner suggested that the independent claims be amended to point out that the identification information is added to the targets instead of attached. At the conclusion of the interview, it was agreed that this feature of the present invention is not taught or suggested by the cited references.

II. Response to §112 Rejections

Claims 18-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. In particular, the Examiner alleges that the recited element "said application means" lacks proper antecedent basis. The Applicants have amended claims 18-22 as suggested by the Examiner; therefore, withdrawal of the §112 rejections is respectfully requested.

III. Response To §103 Rejections

Claims 1, 3, 8-9, 11-12, 14, 18-21, 23, 25-30, 33-34 and 36-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Emens et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,463,343, hereafter "Emens") and further in view of Kerchner (U.S. Patent No. 6,559,882, hereafter "Kerchner"). Claims 20 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Emens and Kerchner, and further in view of Fowler et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,714,977, hereafter "Fowler"). The Applicants traverse the rejections noted above.

The Applicants have amended the independent claims consistent with the suggestions made by the Examiner during the interview on September 1, 2006. In particular, independent claims 1, 3, 23 and 38-39 have been amended to point out that the imaged identification information is "added" to the targets. The identification information is imaged and used to

automatically establish a connection to the targets. This feature of the present invention is not believed to be taught or suggested by the cited references.

Briefly, Emens does not expressly disclose an identification means for automatically identifying a target on the basis of the identification information imaged by the imaging means, nor a step of automatically identifying the target (see, Office Action, pg. 5). Instead, Emens describes associating regions of an image with a device manually. (see, Emens, Col. 5, Line 65-Col. 6, Line 15).

Kerchner uses sensors for sensing infrared wavelengths for controlling the operation of a microwave (i.e., target). However, the reference is silent with regard to identification information being added to the targets. Additionally, although Kirchner discloses the use of a barcode reader and barcode, there is no teaching or suggestion that the barcode reader or barcode is used for automatically establishing a connection between a user terminal and the target (i.e., the food).

Finally, after a detailed review of Fowler, the reference fails to overcome the deficiencies noted above in both Emens and Kerchner. Therefore, even if one of ordinary skill in the art were to combine the teachings of Emens, Kerchner, and Fowler, the combination still would not teach or suggest all the features recited in at least independent claims 1, 3, 23 and 38-39.

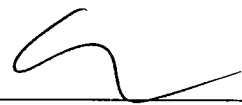
For at least these reasons, independent claims 1, 3, 23 and 38-39 are distinguishable over Emens, Kerchner, and Fowler; individually or in combination. Likewise, dependent claims 8-9, 11-12, 14, 18-22 and 25-30 and 33-37 are also distinguishable over Emens, Kerchner, and Fowler (individually or in combination) based on their dependency from claims 3 and 23.

IV. Conclusion

In light of the above, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3, 8-9, 11-12, 14, 18-23, 25-30 and 33-39 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If any additional fees are due in connection with this application as a whole, the Director is authorized to deduct such fees from deposit account no. 02-1818.

Respectfully submitted,

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